

Snowpack averages below normal in Oregon

Local totals around 85% of annual average

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For the East Oregonian

PENDLETON — One month beyond the winter solstice, Oregon’s mountain ranges are all below normal for annual snowpack averages.

A look at USDA Natural Resource Conservation District Snotel sites that track snowfall and snow water equivalent from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30 each year show more detailed reports of regional precipitation and snowpack.

The Umatilla, Walla Walla and Willow river basins are currently measuring 85% of the annual snowpack average, as of Wednesday, Jan. 27.

The Emigrant Springs Snotel on Mount Emily, 24 miles southeast from Pendleton and located at an elevation of 3,800 feet, started recording the first measurable precipitation of the water year Nov. 8, 2020. As of Jan. 27, 13.6 total inches have fallen, the snow depth is currently 6 inches and the snow water equivalent is 1.3 inches, 23% of the average.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Snow caps the Blue Mountains on Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021. According to the USDA Natural Resource Conservation District, the Umatilla, Walla Walla and Willow river basins are currently measuring 85% of the annual snowpack average as of Jan. 27.

The High Ridge Snotel site, about 20 miles west of Pendleton at 4,920 feet, recorded the site’s first snow Nov. 8 with 1 inch. As of Jan. 27, a total of 25 inches of precipitation has fallen,

slightly above the 30-year average. The snow water equivalent, registering at 15.6 inches, 95% of average.

The Touchet Snotel site in Washington, which sits at 5,530 feet, recorded precipi-

tation the first week of October 2020. To date, it has recorded a total of 28.4 inches of total precipitation, running along the 30-year average. The snow water equivalent measures 18 inches,

85% of average.

Overall, the Grande Ronde, Power, Burnt and Imnaha river basins in Northeast Oregon is at 88% of its average snowpack.

The Mount Howard

Snotel, towering 7,910 feet above Wallowa Lake, started measuring its first snowfall of about 1 inch on Oct. 11, 2020. So far, the Mount Howard Snotel has measured 16.5 inches of precipitation and the snow water equivalent is 5.9 inches; 59% of the average.

At the Moss Springs Snotel outside of Cove, its first measurable snowfall was Oct. 27, 2020. As of Jan. 27, 18 inches of precipitation has fallen. Snow water equivalent is currently at around 12 inches, 78% of average.

The snowpack totals across the rest of the state are a mixed bag.

The John Day Basin is at 91%; the Harney Basin is at 83%, the Upper Deschutes and Crooked river basins is at 79%; the Malheur Basin is at 80%; the Rogue/Umpqua Basin is at 71%; the Willamette Basin is at 65%; the Hood Basin is at 66%, the Lake County/Goose Lake Basin is at 61%; the Klamath Basin is at 66%; and the Owyhee Basin is at 57%.

According to the National Weather Service in Pendleton, Northeast Oregon’s extended outlook for the next month looks for average winter temperatures with a 40% above average chance of precipitation.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

